Australian Bureau of Statistics

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15 percent of employees are trade union members

In August 2018, 15 per cent of employees reported being a member of a trade union in their main job, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

“Employees who are members of a trade union are more likely to be over 40, female, and working full-time.” said Bruce Hockman, Chief Economist at the ABS.

One third of employees in the Education and Training industry reported being trade union members. Other industries with a relatively large share of employees who are members of a trade union include Public Administrative and Safety (30 per cent) and Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (29 per cent).

The publication also contains information about labour hire firms.

“Four per cent of employees reported that they were registered with a labour hire firm or employment agency, with around a third of these reporting they were paid by a labour hire firm or employment agency,” said Mr Hockman.

The Characteristics of Employment Survey is run each August, in conjunction with the monthly Labour Force Survey. The information collected includes data on the distribution of weekly earnings, working arrangements, independent contractors, employment found through a labour hire firm or employment agency and trade union membership.

Further details can be found in Characteristics of Employment, Australia, August 2018 (cat. no. 6333.0) available for free download from https://www.abs.gov.au.

For further information about income and earnings see the Fact Sheet: Income and Earnings, published in the Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

Media note:

“Median” is a statistical term referring to the middle point of a distribution. In the case of earnings, it refers to the earnings of the person in the middle of the distribution, with the same number of people earning more and less than them. Unlike means or simple averages, medians are not skewed by very high and very low earners.

“Casual employees” are defined in this release as “employees without paid leave entitlements”.

When reporting ABS data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or ABS) must be attributed as the

source.

For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Communications Section on 1300 175 070 (8.30am - 5pm Mon-Fri).

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